

"SECTION 2. A State shall have power to set reasonable limits on the amount of contributions that may be accepted by, and the amount of expenditures that may be made by, in support of, or in opposition to, a candidate for nomination for election to, or for election to, State or local office.

"SECTION 3. Congress shall have power to implement and enforce this article by appropriate legislation."

Mr. HOLLINGS. This is the amendment on the Constitution with respect to campaign finance that was just listed by the majority leader. I thank the distinguished Chair, and I thank the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no objection, the Hollings amendment is now set aside.

APPROVING THE PRESIDENTIAL FINDING REGARDING THE POPULATION PLANNING PROGRAM

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senator from Massachusetts is now recognized.

Mr. KERRY. I thank the Chair.

Mr. President, as my colleague from Rhode Island has mentioned, this afternoon, when we come out of the caucuses, we will vote on the vitally important issue of the release of funding for international population programs.

I strongly support the President's finding which states that the funding restriction placed on the previously appropriated population funds "is having a negative impact on the proper functioning of the population planning program." I strongly agree with that finding. The delayed funding, combined with the massive cuts are not only doing significant damage to international family planning programs, but quite literally is threatening the lives of thousands of women and children worldwide.

I hope no one here will underestimate the importance of this vote. It is about values—the values we place on the importance of women's health, child survival, and population assistance. The vote is not about increasing or decreasing funds. The damage of large funding cuts unfortunately already has occurred. We will vote now simply on whether we will release previously appropriated funds for population assistance 5 months late into the fiscal year, or 9 months late into the fiscal year. Let me remind my colleagues that these delays have been going on now for a year and a half, and the cumulative effect is extremely enormously negative.

These programs are on the brink of bankruptcy and are close to shutting down because they have already sustained a 35-percent cut since 1995. In dollar figures, this means a cut from \$547 million in 1995 to \$385 million in 1997, compounded by a year and a half of unprecedented delays in metering out that which has been appropriated at the trickling rate of 8 percent per month.

This should not be a partisan issue. The health and survival of women and

children and efforts to reduce infant mortality are not, or should not be, partisan issues. I joined then-Senator Alan Simpson in representing the United States at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, where the United States was a major leader in galvanizing the international community to action. U.S. leadership was based on bipartisan values about international family planning. The conference brought together people from around the world—of all religious, nationality, and ethnic groups—working together toward responsible methods of family planning, and education, and to establish a platform from which to build toward the availability of these crucial social services in all corners of the globe. However, since the conference in Cairo, some Members of the United States Congress have made it their mission to erode the bipartisan base from which the U.S. pledged to lead by slashing funds and delaying the release of those funds. I think this is punitive, it is indefensible, and it is wrong.

Today we have the opportunity to right at least a small part of this wrong by releasing the previously appropriated funds for population assistance March 1 instead of July 1. In my judgement it is a matter of fundamental responsibility that we approve the Presidential finding that confirms the harm these delays are causing families worldwide, and prevent further delay is making the funds available.

Mr. President, if we do not do this, it means shutting the door to thousands of women and families worldwide who have asked for the opportunity to simply, take control of their lives and their health, and responsibly plan their families. We have succeeded in the difficult task of raising public awareness of the benefits of family planning. As one program coordinator in Nigeria said, "It is one thing to raise public awareness but if there is no access to birth control for poor women, what use is awareness?" We cannot turn our backs now. We must follow through. Let me stress: This vote is not about abortion, as some Senators have tried to argue. Opponents of family planning programs mistakenly believe that funds for these programs enable women to have abortions. That is erroneous emotionalism, Mr. President. We should look at the facts. The fact is that, by law, no U.S. assistance can be used to pay for abortions anywhere in the world. The irony is that the anti-abortion advocates who oppose these programs are actually increasing the incidence of abortions they decry by denying women the means to responsibly space their children. As our former colleague, Senator Mark Hatfield, a well respected prolife leader in support for population funding, articulated in a letter to Representative CHRIS SMITH, * * * "you are contributing to an increase of abortions worldwide because of the funding restrictions on which you insisted * * *. It is

a proven fact that when contraceptive services are not available to women throughout the world, abortion rates increase."

I ask my colleagues, whether you are in favor of abortion or not, to approve the Presidential finding and the earlier release of family planning funds. This is assuredly a vote for women's health, because it will determine whether we give or deny women in impoverished countries a critical ingredient they need to lead healthy lives and raise healthy children.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now stands in recess until the hour of 10 minutes past 2.

Thereupon, at 12:54 p.m., the Senate recessed until 2:10 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COATS).

APPROVING THE PRESIDENTIAL FINDING REGARDING THE POPULATION PLANNING PROGRAM

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the hour of 2:10 having arrived, the Senate will now resume consideration of House Joint Resolution 36, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 36) approving the Presidential finding that the limitation on obligations imposed by section 518A(a) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1997, is having a negative impact on the proper functioning of the population planning program.

The Senate resumed consideration of the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 5 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form with the vote on the joint resolution to occur at 2:15.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, very briefly, I urge my colleagues to vote against the President's request for early release of population funds. Significant concessions have already been made by those of us who support the pro-life position. We agreed to raise the overall level of funding from \$356 million in 1996 to \$385 million, and the disbursement rate from 6 percent to 8 percent a month. Now the President wants to move up the date when disbursement begins. This would make \$123 million more available for organizations that either support or lobby for the legalization of abortion.

The administration claims that 17 projects will be forced to close down if we delay funding until July. Yet, virtually every one of these programs could be funded because they are willing to abide by Mexico City conditions not to support abortion or lobby to legalize it. To protect a few groups who support abortion, the administration is